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M. ELIZABETH CROUSE

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Vigiliæ

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BY

M. ELIZABETH CROUSE

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

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TO MY LITTLE MOTHER NAN.

Contents.

	PAGE
Spray	1
The Harp	3
A Dewdrop	5
A Violet	7
At Anchor	9
Irrigation	11
Comrades	13
Kindred	15
Saved and Lost	17
Comparison	19
Blind Love!	21
The Blossom	23
The Strength of Weakness	25
Impulse	25
Space	25
Weak?	27
Statistics	29
A Day	31
Forgiveness	33
The Vigil	35
"As the Mountains Are"	37
The Triumph	39

PAGE

FINITE AND INFINITE 41
THE BRIDGE 43
LIGHT 45
SURE 47
THE SMILE 49
THE BABY 51
DAWN 53
MAIDENHOOD 55
MOTHERHOOD 57
WIDOWHOOD 59
EYES 61
AN ANTIQUE LOVE-STORY 63
GOD'S ACRE 71
THE LITANY 73
JUNE 75
THE BURDEN-BEARER 77
A CHILD'S QUESTION 79
SPRING MEMORIES 81
A FORGET-ME-NOT 83
THE LUNAR MOTH 85
STARS 87
THE UNATTAINABLE 89
NIGHT 91
THE NORTH STAR 93
THE LAST FORGET-ME-NOT 97

Spray.

THESE are spray from the ocean of Thought,
That surgeth between the shore
Of Sleep and the harbor of Death—
For Life is Thought evermore.

The Harp.

STRUNG to the highest tension was my harp—
I held my breath.
Sure but for one were notes prepared so sharp,
For Sorrow, twin of Death.

But soft and low, like sound of angel's wings,
The music came;
In harmony the player eased the strings,
Joy was his name.

A Dewdrop.

OF heaven thou art, from heaven thou camest, distilled
Into earth's night.
Invisible until enfolded, filled
With heaven's light.
Then thou returnest to heaven as we gaze,
Yet none may see.
Such is the story of our life, our days,
For such are we.

A Violet.

I LOST a little thought last night,
That once had given me keen delight,
And thro' the hours I sought :
Till, weary in the morning bright,
I strolled upon the hill, and quite
Hid in a mass of leaves from sight,
Behold, I found my little thought.

At Anchor.

SUNRISE and God's fresh day,
The dew on all the grass;
And in the harbor ships that nestling lay,
Unfurl their sails and pass.

Sunrise and God's fresh day,
Life's craft the waters spurn;
And may the vessels never go astray
But home to God return.

Sunset and God's tired day
Seeks heaven thro' the west—
And in the harbor ships that sped away,
Now furl their sails and rest.

Irrigation.

WEE, mischievous thunderheads
peeped o'er the mountain,
To look at a little town,
Then rolling and grumbling, and clapping
and tumbling,
They laughed till the tears ran down.

Comrades.

FROM the receding sky a tear
at night was dropt in dew
Upon a flower, that cried, "I 'm here,—
do not forget,—I 'm blue
Because you leave me and because I 'm
always true."

Kindred.

SORROW 's to joy a kindred thing,
Sunrise and sunset are the same,
And autumn 's but another name
For memory and hope of spring.

Saved and Lost.

YOU beg a written thought—
Press me the flower I brought;
Long thro' the years 't will last,
Yet all its life be past.

Comparison.

THERE 's naught exists a single one,
Nor joy nor grief hath life,
Save touched by some comparison
To harmony or strife.

Blind Love!

LOVE is near-sighted, not blind ;
He sees all the beauty in one,
The distant remainder to find
By comparison, poor and undone.

The Blossom.

THE roots dig down in the earth beneath,
The broad green leaves in the air unsheathe,
All that a poor little flower may breathe,
And bear its seed.

And I have delved into deepest lore
And spread my thoughts into Nature's store
All for a little book, no more,
A tiny flower, indeed.

The Strength of Weakness.

HOW often do the clinging hands, tho' weak,
Clasp round strong hearts that otherwise would break.

Impulse.

"ONLY an Impulse!" yet at need
It was crystallized to deed.

Space.

ONE influence makes the sky and mountain blue—
"'T is distance lends enchantment to the view."

Weak?

LIGHT and unsteady, weak,—did you say?

That touch on her hair, that kiss?

Ah, the power is stronger that lifts away,

Than the heaviest pressure is.

Statistics.

"SO many born, so many died to-day—"
Thousands of angels passing up and down;
They come to us, they go to wear their crown,
And keep 'twixt heaven and earth an open way.

A Day.

BEHOLD Life's history since time began :

The dewy sweet creation, and the span
Of good and evil since, of hope and fear,
Between two glorious covers, written here.

Forgiveness.

O FATHER, when I know
Thy sweet forgiveness, 't is my heaviest load.
For even as I go,
The knowledge of the distance of the road,
From me to Thee, the difference that Thou showed
Between us, this is woe
Too hard to carry, save that thus for Thee
Thy heaviest freighted servant I may be.

The Vigil.

THE wind about the casement moans in pain,
In fear the lonely candle shrinks again ;
The moths, outside the blind which makes their night,
Are thoughts which beat and burn themselves for light.

"As the Mountains Are."

THE mountains in the night are like a dream,
Hidden in mist, lest they too stern should seem
To darkened eyes ; and more protection so,
For he who doubts their presence is some foe,
From stranger country. Thus the Lord doth stand,
Forever caring for His chosen band.

The Triumph.

O GLORIOUS triumph! Man has died
For fellow-man,—is God denied
His love as great to show?

May He not give His dearest one—
As many a human heart hath done—
And sound love's depth of woe?

Aye truly—and this Love Divine
Hath proven more than yours or mine,
Both pangs at once to know!

Who can believe in God and Sin,
Without the atoning power to win,—
That life from death may grow?

For of Sin's lowest deep of shade
The opportunity He made
His heights of love to show.

Finite and Infinite.

"SURELY, if all are good, then all must be
Alike and heaven will show monotony,"
I said, and dreamed of light.
Prismatic colors quivered in the air,
Each separate, perfect in itself, and fair,—
While round and thro' and causing all was there
One great, all-blending White.

The Bridge.

LOVE is the keystone of the arch
That leads from earth to heaven.
Safe over it the millions march—
That stone cannot be riven.

Light.

THOU one all perfect Light,
Our lamps are lit at Thine ;
And into darkness, as of night,
We go, to prove they shine.

Sure.

IS love so true? How tell the worth
Of fathers' smiles on childhood given?
By one sure way, the best on earth
We learn by what we dream of heaven.

The Smile.

TO D. B. C.

WE feel a sunshine in the place,
And wonder what it may be.
'T is warmth and tenderness and grace,
God's smile on us—the baby.

The Baby.

A LITTLE hard green bud thy state—
What color wilt thou be?
We guess thy parent stalk, yet wait
Thine unclosed heart to see.

Dawn.

NOW has returned our Sun so bold
And calls the roll on our little sphere.
Trees rustle out, each leaf turns gold,
As one at a time each cries, "I 'm here."

Maidenhood.

SWEET and cold as yonder dale,
Clothed in mists of purity,
Where a crystal river floweth free,—
Thou sleepest with thy dreams of me,
"Ere I," quoth Love, "thy sun, prevail."

Motherhood.

SUCH bended dignity a mother hath !
To heaven's gate alone she trod the path,
And brought her child from thence. How low her head—
For baby hands its benedictions shed.

Widowhood.

NOW is she crowned with perfectness at last.
She bends her head no more—the soul hath passed
That is a part of hers. Still in earth's strife
She labors, knowing that heaven hath her life.

Eyes.

DEEP in a woman's eyes,
More than the laughter lies :—
The prisoned thought of generations past
Thro' these unconscious windows pleads at
last.

An Antique Love-Story.

I.

IN the spring-time, just at even,
When the dial was marking seven,
Came a young man down the garden walk
to choose his lady's flower ;
Side by side he found them growing,
And the queenly rose-bud throwing
Quite a shadow o'er the violet, according to
the hour.

II.

For the youth admired her greatly,
In that she was tall and stately,

And she wore the evening's colors, so warm
and rich and sweet.
"You can have no place beside her,
In what happiness betide her"
Thus he scorned the modest violet that
nestled at her feet.

III.

But the violet was so tiny,
So short, and so sunshiny,
She could n't help her looking up, e'en thro'
a misty tear.
And the world was changed to sweetness,
For she saw it in completeness,
Saw it thro' a rainbow promise, made just
big enough for her.

IV.

She had learned the glorifying
Of the tears and of the sighing ;
Hope is made of lifted troubles raised to
let God's sunshine thro'.
Tho' the rose was queen of even,
Gazed she in the clear blue heaven,
And unconsciously became herself that
color pure and true.

V.

Life grew better for her teaching,
For her fragrance, softly reaching ;
That she lived above the earth, and tho' so
little, did her best.

An Antique Love-Story

While the rose-bud, slowly losing,
Died the death of that quick choosing,
The violet blossomed on thro' all the
spring-time, ever blest.

God's Acre.

GOD'S Acre ! yea, God is the sun
That quickens here the grain.
It knows not death's oblivion ;
We sing " Auf wiedersehen."

The Litany.

"WHERE it listeth, the wind bloweth."

So as o'er a wheatfield goeth,
Sweeping with a soft low sound,
Bowing all heads toward the ground,
O'er the congregation there,
Spirit born, this voice of prayer,
"Bending from thy throne on high,
Hear our solemn litany."

June.

THE days have reached meridian of length,
It is the year's high noon ;
All Nature, in the excess of her strength,
Seems, for an hour, to swoon.

The Burden-Bearer.

LORD, none who are strong because care-free,
Will carry a weight for another:
But one who 's enduring and suffering for Thee,
Has strength for himself and his brother.

A Child's Question.

BUMPS in the sky, dear? yes, one
naughty cloud
Has hit another.
See how their eyes flash—hear the scolding
loud—
That was his brother.

Spring Memories.

NEW things remind us of the old,
For oldest things were newest;
And Memory, a friend may be
At once first, last, and truest.

A Forget-me-not.

A TINY dewdrop held the wide blue skies
In its embrace :
By love transfigured, it did crystallize
To starlike grace.

The lowly heaven incarnate in it there,
So great, so small,
Makes ever to the downcast eyes the prayer,
" Look over all."

The Lunar Moth.

INTO the night
He strayed, a floating fragment of the light:
He caught and cast in shade the candle-
rays,
That crossed his ways.

Into death's fastness,
A tiny flying atom of life's vastness,
He has gone out—the tale of all our
sighing,
All life, all dying.

Stars.

ADOWN the face of Evening tears of dew
Stood, for departing Day ;
Whereat she turned her face from far away—
So bright, the drops each caught a tender ray,
And till she came again they held it true.

The Unattainable.

INFINITE Beauty! thou art
In the Infinite Heart.
That which musicians seek,
That which the poets speak,
Are but a glimpse below—
Now but "in part" we know.

Night.

LO! the black ship of the Night,
Glowing radiantly bright,
All her lamps and portholes gleaming,
And her search-light o'er us streaming—
Laden with a priceless Rest,
Passes noiseless, to the west.

The North Star.

TO A. B. C.

HIGH in the heaven above God holds thee,
My fair North Star.
There, where my darkness of distance enfolds thee,
Shining afar.

God knows I had sunshine,—'t was when thou wert nearer;
Blinded by thee
I was lost; in the night-time the way has grown clearer
Over the sea.

The North Star

I follow to port, my own lantern still
burning.
Lead all the way
To where thou and I with the flames of
our yearning
Shall melt in Day.

The Last Forget-me-not.

ABASHED I stand before thee in the place
I leave—no sweetest word I dare to mar
Of this, our perfect trust, the perfect grace.
Yet all I 've spoken lies in this one flower.
A tear like mine that gazed in heaven's face
And straight became a star :—
A word like mine ; a dew
Dark Evening wept,—there shone bright heaven the best,
And crystallized, a tone of color true,

The Last Forget-me-not

With mission highest, because lowliest,
Always to breathe its love in clearest hue,
To find, in being a heaven, heavenly rest;—
A still, small voice of infinite Silence, Love
That yearns, a folding space, our hearts above.

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